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SEMI-ANNUAL TECHNICAL PROGRESS REPORT

AGENTS DE PROTECTION DE LA NATURE PROJECT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AWP	Annual Work Plan
CEF	<i>Cantonnement des Eaux et Forêts</i>
CDU	<i>Cantonnement de Droit d'Usage</i>
CIREF	<i>Circonscription des Eaux et Forêts</i>
COGE	<i>Comité de Gestion</i>
COS	Orientation and Monitoring Committee
COT	Central Office Team
COTT	Central Office Technical Team
DGDRF	<i>Direction Générale Des Ressources Forestières</i>
FC	<i>Forêt Classée</i>
FSU	Forestry Support Units
FT	Field Team
FV	<i>Forêt Villageoise</i>
GCF	<i>Gestion Contractualisée des Forêts</i>
GELOSE.....	<i>Gestion Locale Sécurisée</i>
GPS.....	Geographic Positioning System
GRACOM	Grassroot Communities
LDI.....	Landscape Development Interventions
MIDP	Micro Integrated Development Projects
MPO	Madagascar Programme Office
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPA.....	Nature Protection Agent
OOS	Organizational and Operational Support
PRONATEX	Produits Naturels Exotiques
QMM	Qit Madagascar Minerals
RA	<i>Responsable d'Antenne</i>
SC	Steering Committee
SIDP	Small Integrated Development Projects
SOW	Scope of Work
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WWF-MWIOPO	WWF – Madagascar West Indian Ocean Programme Office

THE ASSETS GAINED FROM THE PREVIOUS PERIOD

During the first half of 2001, significant progress has been recorded by the project in three main activities, namely:

- **Supervision for signature of seven new contracts of transfer of responsibility for management between the Forest Service and the Grassroot Communities (GRACOM) and the Town Council; such contracts have been developed at three sites : two contracts at Tsitongambarika, two contracts at Tolongoina, and three contracts at Antsiraka;**
- **Support for finalization of seven basic traditional agreements or *Dina fototra* for seven GRACOMs, for management of territory use at the village territory;**
- **Support to officialization of two village associations, which is a preliminary step before the signing procedure of the contract of management transfer.**

Two lessons may be drawn from such a period and help us lay the emphasis on some of our activities:

- **The statement of an offence for clearing in the village of Ivololo at Tsitongambarika site reminds us of the necessity to review the system of general awareness raising and of communication which has been developed so far towards villagers, and of the fact that each member of the village, even if they are not members of the GRACOM association, should learn about such activities for sustainable management of forest resources and know and apply the forest regulation.**
- **The whole process of participatory management of forests requires good analysis: the stage which extends up to the signature of the contract of transfer of responsibility for management is only the first part, and the following stage, that of implementation, is the one that consists of a genuine challenge, on which we must redouble our efforts.**

1 – PLANNED ACTIVITIES

The activities planned for the second half of 2001 are the following:

- **Continue the zoning work on village territories**
- **Complete a draft overarching Forest Reserve management plan for a site and do the same work again for another site**
- **Implement the Management Plans of 2 Village Forests**
- **Develop AWP for 6 field sites and for Central Staff**
- **Conduct training on Forest Inventory Methods at the 2 new sites**
- **Continue the formulation work of Draft Village Forest Management Plan and the presentation and discussion of such plans with villagers**

- Finalize and facilitate signature of 3 management contracts
- Finalize demarcation of village territory boundaries, zoning of village territories and formulation of DINAs for 2 villages per site at least
- Continue work on establishment of village-level forest management associations and committees
- Formulate and submit a proposal to USAID for additional funds for NPA Project (after August 2002) and
- Write and submit semester reports to WWF International, WWF US and the donor for FSU.

2. REALIZED ACTIVITIES

2.1. Technical Activities

The significant progress made during the second half of the year included the following points:

- Thirteen contracts of transfer of responsibility for management of forests have been signed to date
- Two sites have practically completed the demarcation of zones in village territories.

Before developing the details of such achievements, it may be helpful to have a cursory glance at the progress made per site:

ANDRAVORY

The first three contracts of transfer of responsibility for management were signed in the presence of other chairmen of management committees from other villages. Such progress encourages the field team (FT) to attain the objectives of the project and the expected results.

ANKARAHAKA

The FT is making good advance in general awareness raising of villagers so as to foster the emergence of associations of grassroots community. At the same time it is completely working for the exploration and demarcation of village territories. Their working pace demonstrates that they will largely attain the objectives and expected results of the project by 2004.

ANTSIRAKA

The FT is well in advance in the identification of various zones of village territories, as well as in GPS detail collection. Besides, the creation of the Orientation and Monitoring Committee (COS), a body which includes the 9 villages for the management of the whole FC, shows that they are coming nearer to the attainment of the project objectives and expected results.

TOLONGOINA

The FT is evolving in a positive way towards the objectives of the project and the expected results: identification and collection of details for various zones of village territories; community meeting on general awareness raising for creation of the COS of the Forest Reserve.

VONDROZO

This site is lagging behind the other ones, but the FT is trying and redoubling its efforts, by setting up village associations and by delimiting village territories.

TSITONGAMBARIKA I

With its village territories, the number of which is about forty, a very big number if compared to that of the other sites, this site may be defined as well in advance as regards attainment of objectives and expected results. The FT initiated about twenty management committees (COGE) in the organisational and operational structuring of their grassroots associations. It also supported Grassroots Communities (GRACOMs) to start the implementation of contracts of transfer of management, by applying for start-up funds.

2.1.1. Zoning of village territories / Demarcation of boundaries of village territories

ANTSIRAKA

The FT focussed efforts on this activity, so as to facilitate the development of the management plan of Antsiraka Forest Reserve. In sector 1, the agents collected the details from various zones, which have been identified in advance: protection zone, rehabilitation zone, zone for carbonisation, agricultural zone; or zone for reforestation. In sectors 2 and 3, the agents worked up either the general awareness raising of villagers for the exploration of boundaries of village territories and the identification of various zones, or the collection of details about boundaries of village territories.

ANDRAVORY

With a view of concluding the first contracts of transfer of management in this site, three village territories have completed zoning. Three other territories have gone through the various stages of zoning during this first half of the year: general awareness raising about territory demarcation; community meetings to incite villagers to do territory demarcation work; reflection from villagers about the various zones of the territory; identification of various zones; carrying out of demarcation of territory and various zones with help from other agents of the other two sectors; last, GPS collection of details from these various demarcations of territory and zones.

TOLONGOINA

In this site, the FT first tried to conduct actions of General awareness raising / Information about demarcation of village territories, and about zoning inside the village territory. The point is to explain to grassroots communities the importance

of demarcation of village territories, so that it becomes clear in their mind that they have rights and duties within this delimited territory. In addition, with help from the map of the territory, the objective of zoning works was explained; at the same time, preparation and organization of GRACOMs participation in the completion of field works were made: demarcation of village territory and materialization of boundaries between two village territories.

Then, in more advanced sectors, the FT worked up the identification and the materialisation of various zones inside the village territories, with GPS survey of details: zone in the Section with Users' Fees (CDU), with GPS survey of 5 forest fragments; demarcation of the zone which separates the CDU from the conservation zone; demarcation between production zone and conservation zone; materialisation of production zone and of reclamation zone.

TSITONGAMBARIKA I

The high number of village territories (40) in this site leads the FT to redouble its efforts, in particular, for this activity which requires long presence on the field and permanent contact with the GRACOM.

During the first three months of the six month period the FT held seven meetings about zoning, undertook three hikes in the territories; facilitated the meeting with GRACOMs with 5 neighbouring villages, in order to agree on the boundaries of the village territory in the presence of all involved parties. It also conducted the GPS survey of boundaries and the materialization of various zones of 4 village territories. After that, and until the end of the six month period, the FT continued general awareness raising / discussion about the objectives of zoning, and also about GPS survey of details of various zones in village territories.

ANKARAHAKA

The FT of this site is making rapid advances and is acquiring very probing results. It has completed general awareness raising / information about village territories and the objectives of zoning, and started the exploration of various zones in four village territories. It has delimited the main zones: production zones and CDU zone, in three village territories. The sketch-zoning map is being developed.

VONDROZO

This site is lagging behind compared to the other sites, and the FT is attempting to catch up such delay: community meetings in 6 village territories for information / general awareness raising about the objectives of zoning, and for the demarcation of village territories.

2.1.2. Draft of Management Plan of FC

It has been planned that the development of the overarching management plan of Antsiraka FC be completed before the end of year 2001; such was not the case, as ownership and implementation of the zoning processes are long - which

delayed dispatching of elements backed up with figures which are required for such development of Management Plan; some data are now still missing.

2.1.3. Implement the Management Plan of 2 FV

The management plan of the first FV was entrusted to GRACOMs. The management of Farafara FV, in Tsitongambarika I FC (TGK I), has since 1999 been entrusted to GRACOMs through a transfer contract. As management plan constitutes the technical basis of such management, it should have been implemented as from 2000. But villagers facing such a new responsibility are hesitating about initiatives to be taken. Moreover they did not have the funds required for rational forest exploitation. The start-up funds which was set up fairly late, of course, by the project, is not yet used by the COGE. The project, while being present to give them guidance, wanted to leave whole initiative to villagers, in order that they are quite conscious of all aspects of such financial management.

2.1.4. Develop AWP for the 6 field sites and for the COT (Central Office Team)

The development of 2002 AWP was completed in three stages: for one week, the COT assisted The FT of three sites in the elaboration of their AWP; the following week, there was a second field visit by the COT to support the development of 2002 AWP of three other sites. Last, ten days after that, there was the development of the central AWP and the synthesis of all these 2002 AWPs.

FTs are now used to developing AWP and are nearer field reality in setting their objectives and the activities to be conducted.

2.1.5. Conduct training on methods of forest inventory at the 2 new sites

After data collection activities and setting up of village structures, the FTs in the new sites, Ankarahaka and Vondrozo, which were created in 2000, came to the stage of establishing Management Plans of forest zones in village territories. Thus the COTT (Central Office Technical Team) of the COT set to train them in technique and method of forest inventory. It is a one-week theoretical training / refresher course, to which are added 10 days of practice training in forest.

2.1.6. Finalize and facilitate the signature of 3 management contracts

Andravory site, which is situated in the northeast extreme part of the country, is the only former site that has not yet reached the stage of transfer of responsibility in management of forest resources. The GRACOMs were not convinced of their willingness to take such a responsibility, as it was difficult, even impossible, to undertake rational and economical exploitation of protection forest: getting out forest products is too expensive, for lack of road. Finally the FT persuaded them that management of forest, in both the Section with local use (CDU) for their

current use, and the production forest for future generation, is always profitable and interesting to GRACOMs. This is why, toward the end of 2001, the FT assisted in the preparation of the signature of three contracts of responsibility for management, between the Forest Service, which was represented by Antalaha CIREF, three COGE chairmen, and the Mayors of the corresponding communes. All documents were ready before the ceremony: Dina of each of the village territories, document of contract of transfer of management, and Specifications corresponding to each contract. The chairmen of the other GRACOMs as well as the regional guests were invited to take part in such a big event.

2.1.7. Continue formulation of DINAs

In the Vondrozo newly created site, the stage of development of the village territory Dina is planned for year 2002 whereas, for Antsiraka site, the whole site management plan of which is under development, almost all DINAs have been developed. The FT set to raise awareness about the application of DINAs, in particular, regarding matters on illicit woodcuttings, clearings and bushfires, insisting on mobilization of villagers in case of fire, on recall of education, and education of people about the use of firebreaks.

For two other sites, Tolongoina and Andravory, they are at the stage of elaborating the Dina in three village territories, the draft of which was made in coordination with members of the COGE and the agents of the project, before its presentation to the GRACOM national assembly. It has to be signalled that one GRACOM in Tolongoina site insisted on the insertion into the DINA of the regulation relating to harvesting crawfish.

For Tsitongambarika I site, FSU agents and NPA supported villagers in the development of DINAs for 5 village territories; and the agents participated in the campaign of awareness raising for neighbour villages and for those who occupy agriculture fields, about the existence of such DINAs within village territories.

In Ankarahaka site, COGEs members and the project agents are undertaking the amendment of the basic Dina, after the zoning operations of village territories.

2.1.8. Continue work on establishment of Associations of Grassroots Communities and Management Committees

For Antsiraka site, seven out of nine GRACOMs are officialized; for the last two ones, one of the files is at the Commune and the other file is developing its statutes.

For Tolongoina site, support from the FT consists especially in refresher course or in practical application: application of what was learnt during the first training regarding « organizational and operational support » to GRACOMs; recall of

responsibilities of each COGE member; support to development of AWP of the GRACOM.

All these steps for practical and organizational planning, which the FT is doing again step by step with villagers' members of the Management Committee (COGE) of the GRACOM, are essential for the management of these GRACOMs to be effective. Villagers are not at all used to such activities, which are organized in common: they have to be taught them pragmatically and concretely.

For Tsitongambarika I, the FT continues general awareness raising and support sessions to villagers for the establishment of the GRACOM association; and, for this period, this involved three village territories. It also assisted in the officialization of 10 GRACOMs, and supported 13 GRACOMs in practicing structural and operational organization of GRACOMs.

For Vondrozo site, the FT lent support, on the one hand, to the officialization of three GRACOMs and to the refresher course on training in organizational and operational support to the COGE and, on the other hand, to activities of emergence, setting up, and test over a dozen of woman groupings. Woman groupings are very dynamic in this site and the woman FSU agent supports them.

For Andravory and Ankarahaka sites, support activities to associations of Grassroots Communities consist in the general awareness raising of four GRACOMs, and in the elaboration of statutes for six GRACOMs.

2.1.9. Formulate and submit to USAID a proposal for NPA project additional funds (after August 2002)

The Central Staff always remarked that the funding of the two projects, FSU project and NPA project, in the framework of the Debt-for-Nature-Swap Program, do not end at the same period: 2004 for FSU and 2002 for NPA. This issue was taken over during the evaluation in 2001, and it was recommended to formulate and to submit to USAID a proposal for an additional funding.

USAID has informed the Central Staff for Debt-for-Nature-Swap that it is favourable to such a request. The proposal was formulated and submitted to USAID under the cover of WWF-US.

2.1.10. Reforestation

Activities relative to reforestation are focussed at the two sites of Antsiraka and Tolongoina.

- For Antsiraka, for the purposes of making the charcoal-maker Grouping's activity sustainable and for a sustainable management of the resources they use as raw material, they planted 510 cuttings of *Velonavohitra* (*Faguetia*

falcata). This is an indigenous species, which is easy to plant, even as live hedge. It grows fairly rapidly and is of good technological quality (hard wood).

- For Tolongoina, the field team combined a contest with prizes and a social mobilization in order to boost reforestation at village territories. Each village territory will have to present a reforester grouping made up of five people. Finally, three village territories took part, and Sahamaloto village territory is the one which won a piglet as the first prize, a couple of ducks as the second prize and a watering can as the third prize. 650 eucalyptus seedlings were planted, in total. Moreover, this same grouping planted 42 eucalyptus seedlings and 17 Harina seedlings in the reclamation zone of the village territory.

2.1.11. SIDP / MIDP

Small and Micro Integrated Development Projects make good advance during this six month period.

Several SIDPs are in the course of implementation : Antsiraka (1 SIDP), TGK I (2 SIDPs), Andravory (2 SIDPs) and Tolongoina (3 SIDPs).

In Vondrozo site, a SIDP file is under elaboration, and 7 MIDP files for woman groupings are under study.

Several SIDPs are in the course of implementation:

- a. Antsiraka : two SIDPs are nearing completion:
 - Rehabilitation of a school at Amparamboanio, in Antsiraka village territory. It has been one of the priorities among villagers since the time when the school was destroyed by a cyclone ; and the project agreed to fund as it had been promised since the first phase, even if the action of school rehabilitation is not directly related to conservation of natural resources. The project provides metal sheets, door and window frames, cement and paint; villagers, for their part, look for local materials, such as wood, sand, loose chippings; they also provide non-specialized labour. In the course of the second half of year 2001, the finishing works were advancing: there remained the setting up locks and finishing the flooring.
 - Fishing material for Ambodimanga Tanambao village territory : small-scale fishing at sea used to be the main activity of Antsiraka inhabitants but, little by little, this activity was abandoned for lack of maintenance and renewal of fishing materials. As the project came, opportunity of having a new start in such an activity branch incited villagers to prioritise a SIDP proposal to purchase fishing materials (fishing nets, sinkers, and ..). The SIDP is in the course of execution : purchase of materials ; and there remains the villagers completing of the construction, by villagers, of the warehouse/shed for the material

b. Tsitongambarika : one SIDP and one MIDP are under execution :

- **Andranara SIDP :** it is about protection of remaining natural forest. The natural forest in Andranara village territory has always been the prey to illicit exploiters who supply Fort-Dauphin town with planks and charcoal . Villagers then instantly applied for transfer of responsibility for the management of their forest in order first to fight against illicit invaders and, then, to reclaim the wooded surface area in their village territory; the SIDP is going to assist them in this second objective. In the sparsely vegetated zone, they are going to plant eucalyptus, the rapid growth of which will contribute to the cover of this zone. Villagers planted the 430 last eucalyptus seedlings. They also planted 3000 vetiver stump bursts to delimit the remaining forest zone.
- **Mahialambo MIDP:** this is a micro-project on apiculture, the current stage of which is the making of beehives. Mahialambo villagers are waiting for the making of planks from the sustainable forest exploitation in Farafara village territory to buy them for the purposes of this Apiculture MIDP. Such planks are the first products from the implementation of the first contract of transfer of responsibility for management in Tsitongambarika 1 Classified Forest.

c. Andravory : the two SIDPs consist in building two dams for the improvement of rice agriculture irrigation in two village territories, Andrafainkona and Ampisarahana. Before starting building the works proper, the agents first raise awareness among villagers so that the latter fulfil their part of work, namely bringing local materials such as sand, loose stone, round wood.

d. Tolongoina : these are three former SIDPs. They consist of school rehabilitation. The works were planned in the first stage of the project but their execution was delayed because of several factors, the most handicapping of which was the late-coming agreement from the Ministry in charge of basic education in relation with the equipment of the school with one teacher. In the current stage of the project, villagers have always kept the priority of rehabilitating such schools. For this six-month period, villagers have ensured supply of local materials for such rehabilitation works.

2.1.12. General awareness raising

Field agents always organize community Meetings in order to inform and sensitize villagers about precise themes relative to sustainable management of forests: application and observance of « DINAs » ; demarcation of village territories ; demarcation of zones inside the village territory; ravages of bushfires.

But there are more strategic themes, such as general awareness raising of villagers with a view of setting up the Committee of Orientation and Follow-up of the whole site. Such a Committee will group representatives from various village territories, which necessarily have different objectives each.

The organization of the village event at Antsiraka : the « Antsohy Miray II » has also to be mentioned. It is at its second edition. It is a means of emulation and of getting used to village self-promotion during which villagers invested much to ensure the success of the event.

The event took place at Tanambao Ambodimanga, and consisted the following subject-matters and activities: collective sports, cultural show with participation by all neighbouring villages, stalls for various games of skill, exhibition-sale of handicraft, and agriculture products.

This event allowed various GRACOMs first to know one another better, then to exchange experience and practices in the framework of community management and, last, to draw positive or negative lessons from such encounters.

2.1.13. Partnership

- a) Second project by World Bank / WWF Alliance : Developing participatory forest management mechanisms**

This project is an institutional support to MWF. It is funded by WB/WWF Alliance and the National Director of Debt-for-Nature-Swap Program is one of the forest technicians who are implementing it.

After the recruitment of the forest consultant who is going to coordinate the activities of the project, the first stage of the project proceeded as follows during the six months periods : training of trainers on forest policy and contract-based management of forests (Decree on GCF) ; then, training of all agents of the Forest Sector at the six provinces by these trainers.

So, in all, the WWF/WB Alliance has been able to sensitize, inform and train the forest agents of the whole of Madagascar about Forest Policy and Contract-based Management of Forests (GCF). It was a training organized in the six Provinces of the Island. It lasted five days per Province. The workshops raised much participation. They started with fairly short introductions, which were followed by very lively and passionate exchanges and clarifications on reading and understanding of the forest policy and of the GCF. As a summary, it may be said that most agents know this New Forest policy as a theory but do not apply it in their daily work. The participatory management of forests and the transfer of management of forests were novelties for agents working in remote forest sections and clearings, and who have no contact with the ongoing projects. Such encounters gave them the opportunity to stimulate their thirst for knowledge and their enthusiasm of bygone days.

b) Partnership with LDI

Debt-for-Nature-Swap Program established a partnership contract with Landscape Development Interventions (LDI) for the development of two contracts of transfer of responsibility for the management of village forests in Ikongo region.

To do so, Debt-for-Nature-Swap temporarily hired a forest technician to supervise villagers in the process of transfer of management, and of sustainable management of forests.

Such a partnership is going to last ten months.

2.2. Administrative Activities

2.2.1 –WWF International Audit

The annual audit required by WWF International and conducted by the Auditing firm Price WaterHouse Coopers relative to the fiscal year 2001 was made in the course of August 2001. The main objective of such an audit was to check the application of WWF procedures within the Debt-for-Nature-Swap Programme, which is made up of four projects: NPA, FSU, WWF/World Bank Alliance and EAP.

The main recommendation by the auditors focussed on the improvement of follow-up in the execution of accounting operations to have more efficiency in the finance Department. Regular (annual) staff evaluations have also been mentioned to avoid back extra charges for a year.

2.2.2. Recruitment of Vondrozo Branch Official (RA)

Following the departure of the RA of the Vondrozo new site, a new RA was recruited in the course of this six-month period. Advertisements were published and 6 candidates were pre-selected. A former coordinator of sites in the first stage of NPA Project was kept thanks to his experience and his strong involvement in the first stage of NPA Project.

The new RA was accompanied by members of the Central Staff at the time he was to be introduced to the team as a whole and participated in the development of the 2002 Annual Work Plan. After that, the takeover with the Administrative Assistant who worked as interim took place in the presence of the administrative team of the Central Staff.

2.2.3. Staff Evaluation

The result of the evaluation of the Central Staff for years 1998, 1999 and 2000 was published in the course of the second half of year 2002. On the whole, the evaluation of the performance of the staff was satisfactory taking account of the various changes faced by the Program for the last three years.

Application of the result of staff evaluation was conducted at the same time as the annual increase of WWF MWIOPPO, which was at a 6.8% compared to last year.

2.2.4. Collaboration Debt-for-Nature-Swap –Fianarantsoa LDI

In the framework of the collaboration between Debt-for-Nature-Swap and Fianarantsoa LDI, an extension project of Tolongoina site at Ikongo was set up jointly by the two establishments.

During this latter half of year 2001, Meetings between the two parties were held to discuss the feasibility of the Project as well as the contract to be signed. Thus the new FSU agent assigned to Ikongo was recruited in November 2001 for the beginning of the works in December 2001.

2.2.5. WWF/World Bank Alliance Activities

The seven workshops in the framework of WWF/World Bank Alliance were organized from July to December 2001. As the administrative team is responsible for the management of funds for the activities of the second stage of the Alliance Project, it ensured the logistic organization of such workshops with agents from Water and Forestry in the six provinces of Madagascar.

2.2.6. Computerization of Field Offices

In order to improve the management of funds and field works on sites of the Debt-for-Nature-Swap Programme, computerization of branch offices was initiated and undertaken by members of the administrative team. Applications proper to Debt-for-Nature-Swap Programme were developed from the former system of manual management, which used to be applied.

Trainings were given by the Programme Administrator and the two Main Accountants at three branch offices (Fianarantsoa, Sambava and Fort Dauphin) for year 2001.

2.2.7. Field Staff Evaluation

The evaluation of the field staff which is made up of 5 Officials d'Antenne, 12 FSU Agents, 5 Administrative Assistants and 60 NPA Agents, was conducted in the course of the last quarter of 2001 according to the Annual Work Plan of Debt-for-Nature-Swap Programme.

Such evaluations were conducted jointly by members of the Central Staff and the immediate Supervisors of each field agent (DIREF, chef CIREF, chef CEF, FTc.) in order to evaluate and enhance the performance of each agent.

2.2.8. Internal Audit DELTA

An internal audit was organized in the course of the last quarter of 2001 to prepare the audit of NPA Project, which was planned to end in June 2002. Thus such works serve to foresee and to rectify entries which may probably be in non-conformity with USAID procedures in force.

Such works are initiated and entirely taken in charge by WWF MWIOPO.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Training

This activity is always very important in the development of the project, at both the agent's and the villager.

3.1.1. Study tours

All agents of the six sites, accompanied by COGE representatives, went on study tours in various regions of Madagascar. Such openness to other horizons and other realities is always beneficial to villagers. This compels them to reflect, to realize that they are not the only ones who are faced with their problems. For agents, this is an opportunity to live through other experiences and to escape from daily routine.

Study tours constitute one of the most rewarding strategies for both field agents and villagers. Knowing the others' experiences and especially finding out that there is something else than their usual environment raised everybody's enthusiasm and helped the participatory management of forests make a big step. Agents from the four former sites, after the experiences of the previous years, noticed that villagers did not feel well at ease and did not dare to express observations, give opinions or ask questions in front of the novelties which they encountered during such tours : they felt intellectually lower than the agents. Accordingly, agents from former sites (Andravory, Tsitongambarika, Tolongoina and Antsiraka) went on study tour by themselves in 2001, and villagers in such sites are going to go on study tour alone in 2002. For the new two sites, Ankarahaka and Vondrozo, agents and villagers, in a common agreement, went on study tour together.

The fourteen agents from Antsiraka site, two agents of whom are from the Forest Service, the seventeen Andravory agents, two of whom are agents of the Forest Service and one is a Volunteer of Peace Corps, and the nineteen participants from Ankarahaka, eight of whom are villagers, and two agents of the Forest

Service, went on study tour to Fort-Dauphin separately. They visited QMM mining Project, the nursery of exotic plants by an exporter operator (PRONATEX), a forest nursery by one NGO, several COGEs of Tsitongambarika site.

The Tolongoina fourteen agents, three of whom are from the Forest Service, visited Andapa, and had many exchanges with members of GRACOMs in the region.

The twenty-five participants from Vondrozo, two of whom are agents from the Forest Service, and twelve villagers, visited Morondava where there are the GRACOMs which were among the first ones who signed contracts of transfer for management of forests.

Last, the sixteen agents from Tsitongambarika 1 visited four towns, Fianarantsoa, Ambalavao, Moramanga and Arivonimamo, where they visited various socio-economic activities.

3.1.2. Management Plan

The objective of Debt-for-Nature-Swap Programme is, in addition, to ensure the sustainability of the management of Malagasy forests. The strategy which has been adopted consists in relying on the presence of the Forest Service which will always be present in the after project stage.

The development of the Management Plan at village level used to be commissioned to the Central Staff. Ensuring sustainability therefore consists in sharing such a technique to field agents, in particular, to the heads of the Water and Forests Division(CIREF) at site level. The first training proceeded at Tolagnaro Water and Forest Division.

The following participated in this training : the Head of Tolagnaro Water and Forest Division, the Head of the Forest Section, the FSU agents and some agents from Tsitongambarika 2 Forest Project, of whom the Technical Adviser. The trainers of the Central Staff presented the reason for a Management Plan, the various types, the content of a Management Scheme and a Management Plan, the various stages of the development of a Management Plan. As practice exercise, inventory data processing and their interpretation were used. The field team will afterwards continue the inventory data processing ; and the Management Plan sketch will afterwards be undertaken during another grouping of participants with the Central Staff.

The participants were very much interested in this training-exchange which allowed them to have a kind of refresh course on school theoretical knowledge, which has never been applied, and to know the interest of the issue in terms of forest administration and management.

3.1.3. Organizational and Operational Support (OOS)

The training relative to OOS of the Associations of GRACOMs were characterized by the members of their management Committee (COGE) has been done for the four former sites. For Ankarahaka and Vondrozo, it took place in the last quarter. It is a training in cascade in which the agents are trained first by sociology specialists; after that, the agents train COGE members in the presence of such specialists who provide corrections, if any.

In some former sites, like Tolongoina, as the agents noticed that some COGEs always have problems in the organization and conduct of their associations, they held refresher course and clarification sessions on this OOS theme.

3.1.4. Forest Inventory

Similarly, regarding this technical theme, the agents from Ankarahaka site, who were trained by Fénérive CIREF Head, by Maroantsetra CEF Head, by two FSU agents, by the nine NPA and by villager botanists, as well as the agents from Vondrozo site, with Manakara CIREF Head, Farafangana and Vondrozo CEF Heads, the two FSU, the eight NPA, plus the villager botanists, received a training in Forest Inventory : definition, types, methods, work organization and some measuring materials. Roughly speaking, the participants did not have particular difficulties in assimilation as it was a kind of refresher course.

3.1.5. Supervision of GRACOMs after the management transfer

It was stated that, after signature of the contract of transfer of responsibility for management, under the leadership of the members of COGEs, GRACOMs showed almost generalized wait-and-see attitude and lack of initiatives. They somewhere wait for orders or initiatives, whereas these ones should come from themselves.

Therefore it appeared indispensable to prepare supervision by field agents from such GRACOMs for the implementation of such a transfer of responsibility for management.

A training about the measures to be taken and the steps to be made was given first to agents from Antsiraka site. Such steps were discussed and decided at the central level.

It was, in fact, a refresher course and a training in practice for the members of COGEs as regards the theme of Organizational and Operational Support (OOS). They have formerly been trained by sociologist consultants in this module, but they still must be supervised in practice and reality ; and this role as supervisor and as adviser is the one which the agents will ensure after signature of the contract of transfer of responsibility for management of forests.

3.2. External Contacts

3.2.1. Exchange/Information Mission on participatory management of forests in Mali and in Cameroon

In November, the national foresters of Debt-for-Nature-Swap Programme, the National Director, with the two national coordinators, together with the Forest Programme Officer of WWF-MWIO Programme and the government representative, Tolagnaro CIREF Head, went on an information and exchange tour in Mali and in Cameroon as regards the experience of these countries in terms of community management of forests and, in particular, of transfer of responsibility to grassroots communities for management of forests: to see Madagascar situation compared with the experiences of these countries. In fact, the situation seems to be slightly the same, which is all three countries are in the stage of signature of management contracts and awaiting the implementation of such contracts.

3.2.2. Ecoregion Action Plan

It is a project funded by WWF-Sweden for rational management of the Ecoregion of Madagascar Humid Forests.

For the first exploration stage, under the coordination by the Technical Advisor of the FSU Project and by the Forests Program Officer of WWF Madagascar, the project first recruited two senior consultants, one forester and one sociologist who, with help from junior consultants, are going to undertake the biological exploration and the socio-economic exploration of the Ecoregion of Madagascar Humid Forests.

3.3. Change within the Staff

Following the dismissal of the Branch Official at Vondrozo site because of mismanagement, the Program Administration recruited a new Official.

4. MAJOR EVENTS

ANDRAVORY

The simultaneous signature of three contracts of transfer for management with the GRACOMs of three various village territories was the big event in this Andravory site, which was its first signature of contracts.

All Mayors of Communes around Andravory FC, the representatives of all other GRACOMs of the other village territories around Andravory, the representatives of the Forest Service of Antalaha CIREF, and the National Coordinator of FSU Project, all attended this grand event.

The other COGE chairmen from the other village territories, during the signing ceremony, were conscious of the importance of taking such responsibility and want also to accelerate the transfer process in their village territory.

5. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

The major constraint faced by the project is apathy shown by villagers in the initiative of implementing the management contracts, which they signed. The project would like to see the emergence of such strength of character and independence on the part of the COGEs members so that there is no longer much interference on the project's part. However, we have to be realistic about the fact that villagers still need sizeable support in this very implementation stage.

Another important problem is the big number of village territories in some sites like Tsitongambarika 1 or Andravory. This is a fact which has always been mentioned previously, but it assumes that the agents must do a race against time to complete all planned activities in time and to ensure a continuous supervision which has to be constantly renewed.

6. NOTICED IMPACTS

Slightly in contradiction with the constraint noticed about the apathetic attitude of villagers for the execution of the clauses of the contract which they signed, there is a kind of keen interest and feverishness which arises and reaches the GRACOMs which have not signed contracts of transfer of forest management, and which are lending attention to those which have had a contract. The potential contracts, which will be signed, are important. This supposes intensification of activities in zoning, forest inventories, and support to structuring of village associations.

7. ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTH PERIOD

- a) Train villagers and field agents in implementation of Management Contracts and Management Plans**
- b) Train field agents in development of Forest Management Plans**
- c) Continue inter-village exchange-visits**
- d) Continue support to structuring of village associations**

- e) Prepare montage of files of Small and Micro Integrated Development Projects (SIDP/MIDP) : 7 SIDP and 9MIDP**
- f) Conduct forest inventories for Sections with Local use (CDU) for 6 village territories**
- g) Support the process of management transfer for 10 village territories at least**
- h) Continue the development of Management Plan for whole sites**
- i) Help in the preparation of two local events**
- j) Support reclamation of natural forest in deteriorated zones**
- k) Continue zoning activities in village territories**
- l) Continue support to woman groupings**